

# The Viet Nam Triple Deuce, Inc.

## An Association of 2 Bn. (Mech) 22nd Infantry Regiment Viet Nam Veterans

Editors Dan & Vera Streit D 2/22 1969  
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**Together Then.....Together Again!.....Thanks for Being There...&...Welcome Home**

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### Reunion Dates: October 5-8, 2006

Location; Omaha Marriott Hotel

For Reservations: Call Marriott Reservations 1-800-228-9290

Identify yourself with "22nd Infantry Regiment Society"

Cost of Room: \$79.00 Plus Tax of 16.48% total \$92.02

Make Reservation before September 14, 2006.

Bus tip to Offutt Air Force base (Friday) Limited seating. This will include lunch. \$25.00

Friday Buffet: \$30.00

Saturday Banquet: \$35.00/\$30.00 (Beef/Chicken)

Ladies Brunch: \$20.00

Watch upcoming newsletters for additional information

### President's Message

Hello to all,

Well we've talked about it all year and here they are racing right at us and by us. How do Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays get here from the Fourth of July in about an hour and a half? I swear I still have a 4th decoration up in the yard and have to go take it down to make room for the Christmas wreath. Hope you are all coping with this phenomenon better than we are. Point here is that we have very little time to show our support to the active 2/22nd troops, and need to make a special effort to do so. Please take a few minutes of time to send your e-mail support of their efforts before Christmas. The best possible means of reaching them personally can be found at the support group's web site, <http://tripledeuce1.tripledeucefrg.org/> This site offers several options for showing your support and stands as a great testimony to the families of the current Triple Deuce.

A suggestion for helping Dan & Vera with stories in the newsletter. They really need our help. If you are fresh out of Nam stories, or haven't been able to put yours in words yet, how about sending them a recount of how you connected with the VN222 or 22nd IRS? Or how about a special memory from one of the reunions you've attended? Our new finds can use all the info we can provide about that first time reunion.

Lon Oakley has been busy constructing our first locators "how to" booklet. It is called "Welcome Home Brother" and is getting a final look at by all the past and present locators we could think of before publishing and distribution. If you are one of these locators and have not received a copy via e-mail please contact me

ASAP so we can get your input. Part of it is a listing of all current assigned Company locators, showing several individual companies vacant. If you have any interest in filling a slot please contact me or another Board member.

1. **Chief Locator - Lon Oakley, Jr.**  
(Alpha 1969)

Email [ldo82288@hotmail.com](mailto:ldo82288@hotmail.com)

Phone: 210-878-7072

2. **Boat Guys-** vacant

3. **'67 Replacements-** vacant

4. **Alpha Co. Locator – Gary Hartt**  
(Alpha 1966)

Email: [gchartt@bctonline.com](mailto:gchartt@bctonline.com)

Phone:

5. **Bravo Co. Locator – Clark L. Lohmann** ( Bravo 1967-68)

Email: [clark222@cox.net](mailto:clark222@cox.net)

Phone: 402-731-4819

**Charlie Co. Locator – Bob Owens** (Charlie 1979)

Email: [bob.owens@rrd.com](mailto:bob.owens@rrd.com)

Phone: 936-569-8407

**Delta Co. Locator – Dan Streit**  
(Delta 1969)

Email: [dvstreit@cebridge.net](mailto:dvstreit@cebridge.net)

Phone: 785-738-2419

also

**Alton Fennel** (HHC, S4, Delta 1969)

E mail : [afennell@columbus.rr.com](mailto:afennell@columbus.rr.com)

Phone: 614-235-4481

**HHC Co. Locator** -vacant

**Recon Platoon Locator – Erik Eopsahl**

Email – [epopsahl@aol.com](mailto:epopsahl@aol.com)

Phone:

**VN 222 Secretary Joe Esser**

(Alpha 1969)

Email - [jtewhitesox@comcast.net](mailto:jtewhitesox@comcast.net)

Phone: 847-726-7530

## VN 222 Board of Directors

**Dick Nash** –President (Alpha & Headquarters Company 1969) [nash222@winco.net](mailto:nash222@winco.net)

**Lynn Dalpez**- V. Pres  
(Charlie 1965-67)

[dalpez@yahoo.com](mailto:dalpez@yahoo.com)

**Jim May** – Treasurer ( Prov. Co. 1968)

[jlmay@tds.net](mailto:jlmay@tds.net)

**Dan Streit** (Delta 1969)

[dvstreit@cebridge.net](mailto:dvstreit@cebridge.net)

**“Doc” Matz** (HHC 1965-67)

[DocMatz222@comcast.net](mailto:DocMatz222@comcast.net)

Hope all had a great Thanksgiving and have a likewise Christmas & New Years. With that turn to the 2006 calendar you can start counting off the days until our next reunion in Omaha, October 5-8th.

**Dick**

## Editor's Comments

Winter what a magic time. I wanted to share some insight with you that might be relevant to the season. As I wrote this **Veteran's Day** was rapidly approaching. Our local VFW post was gearing up for the annual Veteran's Day Parade and community dinner. It is a big deal. Small town America gathers to honor Veterans of all ages and from all branches of service. The schools in the county (and neighboring ones) were dismissed. The local college was closed. Businesses were closed. Guess who did the work---the same ones who gave us the freedom to gather and celebrate. The veterans.

## Savage Grace Unplugged!

created by : SAVAGE GRACE

But. . . something else is on my mind  
**Thanksgiving.** Like many I hosted Thanksgiving dinner for family. (I say I because the dear wife had to work---hospitals are open on holidays). We have so much for which to be thankful---our freedom and the Brothers who helped establish it are high on that list. But. . . it is something else. The wife and I both celebrate birthdays within the month (she is much younger). I could speak of the beauty of aging and the right to do so in such a wonderful place

But. . . it is something more. Ah yes,  
**Christmas.** With six grandkids ranging in ages from 5 months to 13 years, celebrating the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ and our love for each other would be worth many words. We are humbled by the sacrifices so many have made in our country's history so we can observe religious holidays as we choose or ignore them if that is our choice.

But. . . there is still something different. **New Years** with much to celebrate; much to anticipate. Contacts with brothers awaiting us. Planning for the next reunion. Bantering each other through the e-mail. However we elect to spend our time, energy and money we can do so because of the commitment of the brave ones who served.

But. . . it is something else. The true meaning of winter is exemplified by Jim May sleeping in the woods awaiting the deer. Hibernation. When animals hibernate it is more than sleep. They can be moved around, touched, and not know it. The animal will use stored body fat (but not muscle) and emerge in the spring thinner. This process happens because it is cold and food is scarce. During hibernation the animal's body temperature drops. They adapt to the environment. How many of our brothers are out there moving through life without the connection to the Triple Deuce? How many do not have the emotional food that a connection to the band of Brothers provides? How many just exist in their environment when a single contact might awaken them from the deep sleep and let them know the glory we have all found in our unity. As Dick mentioned in his President's column, Lon is doing an extraordinary job on the Locator's Guide. Please use it in your search for Brothers. And that's what I have to say about winter.  
**Dan (Delta 69)**

There was a time so long ago, that seems like yesterday.

The day the children lost their lives, a day for which I'll pay.

I placed my self behind these walls because of what I'd done.

I prayed some days , in several ways, to be denied the sun.

For the longest time I tried to find answers to ease the pain

Self medicating every day to eliminate the rain

I placed myself behind these bars to lock inside my guilt

And now I find, I'm lost in time, I have begun to wilt

Many years have passed away never to be seen  
I hesitate to ask myself is this just a dream?

I placed myself inside this void so empty, deep, and cold.

Tortured by the memories wrapped inside my soul

And now I feel the pressure the time is closing in  
I pray once more , this life to die, another to begin

These walls I placed myself behind although some years ago,

seem to crumble more each day some light begins to show

The pain that dwelt so deep within will rise and dissipate

The rain that poured will be no more now that I'm awake.

These bars I placed myself behind have now begun to rust

No longer caged by fits of rage a lesson learned in trust

As for the years that came and went unnoticed and unseen

I find myself looking forward ,no more the impossible dream

This void I placed myself within it too has begun to fill

My soul refreshed anew a strengthening of my will

As I soar above the clouds no more lost in time

I thank you Lord for now I know I'm alive and doing fine.

# Reunion Loan Program

During the Business Meeting at the Kansas City reunion ways were discussed that might be used to help bring more Vietnam Triple Deucers to future reunions. I believe it was Dwight Brennerman who suggested that we consider some type of **loan program** that would help Members who wished to attend a reunion, but needed some financial assistance to do so. I am please to report that the Board has adopted a **Reunion Loan Program**.

Here's an outline of how the **Program** will work:

1. Funds will be available for lodging, reunion registration, 22 IRS Reunion activities including tours and banquets, and incidental expenses. Incidentals include breakfast and lunch expenses.
2. No cash advances will be made. Vietnam Triple Deuce, Inc. will pay all approved items directly to the provider. This does not include incidental expenses. The Treasurer will be responsible for incidental cost.
3. Bar expenses or room service charges will **NOT** be considered as Program expenses.
4. The Member taking the loan and the Treasurer will agree to loan repayment schedules. There are no timetables for repayment and there are no interest charges.
5. The Board will, 12 months before the next 22 IRS Reunion, determine the amount that is to be allocated for the **Program** and the number of Members allowed to participate.
6. Selection will be considered on a "first come, first served" basis.
7. The identity of the Member taking the loan will not be announced or in any way made public.

The Board has allocated \$3,000 for the Omaha Reunion to be split between 5 Members. This is not to say that a Member must borrow all of the \$600 available to him. If a Member wishes to have only part of his expenses covered under the **Program**, that will be fine. In fact, it would

be very fine because it would allow for more Members to take advantage of the **Program**.

So, if you have been considering coming to a Reunion, but haven't because your budget won't allow for it, well here's your chance to come and visit with your Vietnam Triple Deuce Brothers. The funds we have in the Treasury are intended for this type of use and nothing would please your Combat Brothers more than to have you come to the Omaha Reunion in October 2006.

Anyone wishing to take advantage of the **Reunion Loan Program** should contact me. Remember, this is a "first come, first served" arrangement.

**Jim May**  
Treasurer  
(207) 634-3355  
jlmay@tds.net

## New Finds

**Edward Nygren** who was in Alpha Triple Deuce August 67-August 68 in the mortar platoon.  
[enygren@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:enygren@tampabay.rr.com)

**Moe Johanson**  
4948 Rock Road  
Sumas, WA 98295  
PH 360-220-3791  
Charlie Co., 4<sup>th</sup> ID, 1965 to 1967

**Harry Lawrence**  
19 Spokane Drive  
Inchelium, WA 99138  
PH 509-722-4414  
Charlie Co., 4<sup>th</sup> ID, 1965 to 1967  
Harry would like to be in contact with all of the Men he served with.

**Jim King**  
6431 Woodlyn Road  
Ferndale, WA 98248  
PH 360-384-2298  
Charlie Co., 4<sup>th</sup> ID, 1965 to 1967

**Ronald L. "Sam" Fowler**  
6236 N. New Hope Road  
Hermitage, TN 37076  
PH 615-415-0733

[samboats@bellsouth.net](mailto:samboats@bellsouth.net)

Charlie Co., 25<sup>th</sup> ID Nov. 1967 to Jan. 1968  
Sam would like to hear from anyone who remembers him.

**Lawrence Nuckolls**

3117 Harvest Lane  
Memphis, TN 38127  
PH 901-568-2501

[larryn1121@aol.com](mailto:larryn1121@aol.com)

Bravo Co., 25<sup>th</sup> ID Dec. 1968 to Nov. 1970

**Dick Thompson**

Box 424  
Saratoga, WY. 82031  
307-326-5149  
2-22 Mech HHQ Recon.

## Guest Books Hits

Name: **Andrew Straley**

Email: [andy1234769@sbcglobal.net](mailto:andy1234769@sbcglobal.net)

Date: 9-30-05

**Comments:** I was in A Co. 2/22 4<sup>th</sup> Inf. Div. Went over on the boat 1966 to 1967. I hope every body is in good health.

Name: **William Francis Hawkins**

Email: [BRANDYEYE2@AOL.COM](mailto:BRANDYEYE2@AOL.COM)

Date: 11-23-2005

Phone: 607-775-3186

**Comments:** Hi all my Co. B guys thought I would check in to let you all know I am thinking of you all the time. I have been in contact with a few of the guys that have seen my messages on this web site. It is good to hear from all of you. Well will close for now keep in touch.  
Forever Bill Shortround Hawkins

Name: **Robert Bruce Blakeswlee**

Email: [Beach1722@aol.com](mailto:Beach1722@aol.com)

Date: 11-23-2005

**Comments:** Remembering Thanksgiving in Viet Nam. Thanks to all out great Cooks that prepared us a hot meal and to those that got it to us.

Remembering all those who are no longer with us and for the honor of having served with them. Thanks to all that served after us and to those serving now. May God keep them safe so that next Thanksgiving they may spend it with family and friends right here in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

## CYBERGENIC ALIENS IN WHITE HOUSE BASEMENT!

I know this is true, I got an email about it... Sound familiar? We have all received this type of email. Unfortunately, not all of them are so blatantly foolish. Often they are about politicians, celebrities, companies, or ethnic groups. Some are simply misinforming; others could be outright dangerous. Here are some which won't go away:

For the third year in a row, I have received an email from my Sister-in-law telling me that "this is the best opportunity to view Mars in 85,000 years!" Actually, we were at our closest to Mars in 85,000 years; but this occurred three years ago. Due to the tilt in Earth's axis, you will get a much better view in November, 2005. Put this in the MISINFORMATION category.

"Target hates Veterans!" This started with a misunderstanding, by a well meaning Veteran. Now it has come back with the added lie that Target is a "French owned" company. Did it ever occur to anyone that someone has a personal grudge against Target? This could also be an attempt to manipulate stock prices. Whatever - It is untrue. It has also been debunked by the American Legion.

Then there are the type of rumors which I despise most. These are the type that target certain racial or ethnic groups. There was one, after 9/11/01, which alleged that the Arab owners of a convenience store were seen, by a pa-

triotic the Coke deliveryman, celebrating the destruction of WTC. It was totally untrue. This type of thing can encourage HATE CRIMES folks. Recently I have seen several emails allegedly written by someone who has personal knowledge that bus loads of Katrina refugees have arrived at some location, and were found to have the bus packed with stolen merchandise! In some cases they are also stoned on drugs. HEY! We all know that some people behaved badly during the crises, but why slander everyone? Don't the refugees have enough problems?

I would suggest that everyone visit one of the sites listed below, my favorite is "Snopes." Once you are in the site, it is very easy to create a desk top shortcut for your convenience. Then you will be able to quickly check out any story, BEFORE passing it on. If you don't have the time to check it out? Don't waste our time by forwarding it.

[www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)

[www.urbanlegends.about.com](http://www.urbanlegends.about.com)

[www.warhead.com](http://www.warhead.com)

[www.truthorfiction.com](http://www.truthorfiction.com)

**Mad Doc**

## **Dau Tieng XT493472 (Part 3)**

When I arrived in Dau Tieng one of the first things I noticed that a lot of people were wearing 4<sup>th</sup> ID patches on their right sleeves. My first impression was that these men were on a second tour, but there were just too many of them. When I asked about the 4<sup>th</sup> ID patch I learned about the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bde swap between the 25<sup>th</sup> ID and the 4<sup>th</sup> ID and that Dau Tieng had been a 4<sup>th</sup> ID base. This didn't mean too much at the time, but I would soon learn that both Tay Ninh and Cu Chi considered Dau Tieng as an unwanted part of the 25<sup>th</sup> ID. I also learned that the 4<sup>th</sup> ID Troops remaining in Dau Tieng wanted nothing to do with the 25<sup>th</sup> ID. What may have been a healthy competitive atmosphere had gone too far.

My first exposure to the dislike came when I learned that the Bn CO would be visiting in the

morning. I asked the two Lieutenants, both 4<sup>th</sup> ID leftovers, how I should prepare for the visit. They both laughed at me and said there would be no visit. I was confused. I asked why the CO, Lt C, would say the Bn CO was coming when he wasn't. They told me that this announcement was made every four of five days. They went on to say that because we got hit with mortars and rockets every day that the Cu Chi brass was afraid to come up to Dau Tieng. Now I began to understand what the Lieutenant in the Officer's club in Cu Chi was telling me when he was advised that I ask to go to Dau Tieng. At 6:15 AM the next morning we got blasted by mortars and rockets and before I left the Provisional Co. area to go to the convoy area I learned that the Bn CO had cancelled his visit. Dau Tieng just might prove to be a place where no one was going to check to see if my bed was made.

During my first two weeks in Dau Tieng I learned about "no fire zones," and that the rubber was sacred. I learned that when the line units were away we were subject to constant mortar and rocket attacks. I learned that I could hear mortars coming out of tubes and 122-mm rockets coming in. I could tell by the sound of the explosion just how close a mortar round had hit and I learned that if I could hear a high pitch sound that a mortar round was coming down on my head. The people around me learned that if I yelled "incoming" or if they saw me heading for a trench or bunker that they shouldn't question me. My acute sense of hearing was put to good use.

I also learned that I couldn't hear a sniper round until it had gone by and that I couldn't hear 107-mm rockets until they had passed by. My inability to defend against these two weapons caused me come to the realization that I was more likely than not to be wounded or killed in Dau Tieng. It may sound strange, but once I accepted the situation for what it was I became more relaxed. This is not to say that I gave up on running from mortars and rockets but I was able to turn my fear into something else. I knew where I could and couldn't be effective in protecting myself and those around me and I knew there was much beyond my control. I would concentrate on those areas where I had some control.

On the night of April 5, 1968 things in the Provisional Co. area got worse. Word had come that Martin Luther King, Jr. had been murdered. Before the night was over hand grenades were being tossed around and a number of soldiers were taken off by the MP's. The CO, Lt. C, was med-evacted and after being stabilized sent to the States for more hospitalization. The night of the 6<sup>th</sup> was quiet but on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> more grenades were tossed around. Now we had two enemies to deal with, the one outside the wire and the one inside the wire. Things became very complicated.

It was believed that most of the trouble was started by a few members of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Co. This was one of the units that brought the ammo to the artillery units. And, as stated earlier, anyone coming to Dau Tieng in any type of support roll stayed in the Provisional Co. During the subsequent investigation it was learned that some of the 223<sup>rd</sup> Transportation personnel had spent time in LBJ for causing trouble in other units. Even today, after all these years of thinking about what went on, I can not bring myself to think of one person in the Provisional Co. or the Triple Deuce who would have committed these acts. The Men, all the Men, had become too close to hurt one another. The Men who were arrested, some of them Triple Deucers, had been in the motor pool involved in their usual ritual of roasting whatever they had stolen in Tay Ninh. That's when the grenades went off. The Men who were arrested, Black Men, were just as afraid of what was going on as anyone else. Their crimes were not obeying orders when told to put their weapons down. I knew these Men; they were not cowards and would not have been involved in these cowardly acts. However, the damage was done and distrust was fostered. It took a while before the Troops started to trust each other again. The 223<sup>rd</sup> never spent another night in the Provisional Co. area.

Another thing that changed was that the Bn CO made a visit to Dau Tieng. He had no choice but to come. He brought with him Lieutenant Wakefield and announced that Lt Wakefield would be the new CO of the Provisional Co. I had met Dave Wakefield in Cu Chi. He was a likeable guy I'm sure would have done a fine job, except that the next day the Bn XO returned

with a Captain and announced that the Captain was the new CO. You can imagine that this didn't leave anyone with a feeling that Cu Chi had any idea of what they were doing.

A few days before all of this went on I was introduced to two Special Forces NCO's who were working in the area with a force of Mountainards. As with most of my stories this one begins with, "I was doing something when someone came and said, 'LT, there's someone in the motor pool who wants to see you.'" After assuring these NCO's that I really was a Lieutenant, (I didn't wear rank and I was often without a shirt when I was doing my home improvements.) and the exchange of pleasantries I asked what it was that I could do for them. They said that they had heard that I could help them in getting some much-needed items. I anticipated that they wanted their own helicopter or M-48 tank and was very surprised to learn that what they wanted was something as simple as C rations and ammo. I asked why they needed me to help them with this and they explained that they were under the control of MACV and had to make all their supply request to MACV who in turn would make a request to the 25<sup>th</sup> ID and then down to Cu Chi, Tay Ninh or Dau Tieng and then they could get what they needed. Of course this took a week or more and by then they would have moved on to another location. (Just another reason to feel as I do about the Quartermasters.) I explained my, "If you use it here, It's OK, but if you take it home, then it's stealing," rule and told the Squad leader who brought me to meet these guys, to get them whatever they wanted. The Special Forces moved in to the Provisional Co. that day. It was a couple of days after the new CO arrived on April 8 that he asked if the SF had always been there. He had been told nothing of their presence by the Bn CO or XO. I, not wanting to explain my "stealing" rule to him, said that whenever they were in the area they stayed with us. It wasn't too long before half the truck drivers in the Provisional Co. were wearing SF style camo jungle fatigues. The SF NCO's had had plenty of them and would reward anyone with a set who helped them in their "procurement" efforts. In May I accepted, on behalf of the Provisional Co., a plaque presented by the Special Forces in appreciation for the support we were provid-

ing. I have never before or since received any formal recognition for "procurement," legal or otherwise.

It was also during this time that the Battle of Good Friday took place. What I didn't know, until reading Chuck Boyle's book, *Absolution*, was that no one on the ground in either 2/22 or 3/22 had any idea of what they were facing. I did and assumed that 2/22 knew because the entire Battalion, including the Recon Platoon, had been brought together for this action. My diary note of April 12, 1968 reads, in part, "...24 KIA's were brought in today. The big battle is going on where the SF troops reconed a regiment..."

Those of you who were at the San Antonio reunion may recall that when Chuck Boyle spoke he said that he'd just learned that the clerks in Dau Tieng knew what 2/22 and 3/22 were facing, but that they didn't. He was correct. In fact, I watched the battle rage from the helicopter rearm point for most of the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> of April. I had brought some help out to the rearm point early in the evening because I knew that the gunships would be coming and going all night. There were two radios in my Jeep; I had one set on the Recon Plt frequency and the other on the Bde frequency. I also had a portable AM/FM radio I had purchased at the PX that would pick-up the conversation between the FAC and the jets. The entire night was surreal. It was like watching a movie at a drive-in theater, except that there were no special effects. What was going on was very real.

Those of you who were out there on Good Friday didn't know about the NVA regiment because the SF guys reported their findings to MACV, who, in turn, would forward the report to Division G-2. G-2 would instruct Brigade who sent the Battalions into position. It appears that somewhere along the way, no one bothered to tell the Bn CO's just what they could expect. If I could turn the clock back for only a moment I would let Don Skrove know what I knew. I'm sure that the word would have gotten to the other Troops on the ground.

Other things were going on while the Battalion was at Good Friday. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of April a Sergeant got in a Jeep and drove out of Dau Tieng. The MP's caught up with him on the Ben Cui Road. When asked what he was doing he replied that he was going home. That Sergeant

had 19 days left in country and the poor guy cracked. And, something else happened while my beloved Recon Platoon was in Good Friday; the convoy got new escorts. Day one it was 4/23. They were very professional. Day two was the Recon Platoon of the 1/5<sup>th</sup>. They got lost! Can you imagine getting lost with only one road to take? Well, it happened. I had the convoy ready to go and the Lt. from the 1/5<sup>th</sup> was calling off checkpoints as he passed. It was getting late so I took the convoy out myself. I anticipated meeting up with the 1/5 just beyond Ambush Alley where the Ben Cui Rubber ended. The Engineers had swept the road so that they could get to the laterite pit that was on the right side of the road beyond the rubber. As I approached the Engineers were leaving but I wasn't concerned because the escorts should be along in just a few minutes. I radioed the 1/5 Lt and asked for his location, he reported that he was at CP 34. Well, I was at CP 34 and I couldn't see him, his tracks or any dust coming down the road. He was lost. Instead of turning to go to Dau Tieng he had gone straight and was on his way to Trang Bang. I radioed Bde, explained what was going on and said that I was turning the convoy around and coming back to Dau Tieng. The Bde XO told me to stay where I was. I re-stated our situation and said that the convoy was coming back. The Bde XO told me, again, to stay where I was and that he was coming out to join me. I stayed, he came out and never said one word to me about my refusal. He knew I was right. The Bde XO did tell me that he would take care of the 1/5 problem himself.

My sense then, and this was later confirmed, was that the 1/5<sup>th</sup> Recon Platoon was no where as competent as the Triple Deuce Recon Platoon. They were in different leagues. I was fortunate to have been kidnapped by the Triple deuce.

Next part, Major L comes to visit.

**Jim May**

## DELAYED ENTRY (PART 2)

"I still have my music"

composed by: I.B. DaPhish

As I entered the library I notice a plaque on the wall. A friend had died in Vietnam. This was the first time I had been directly affected by the war. I started paying closer attention to the news. Graduation was 8 months away and I wasn't sure what might happen. My passive attitude kept me from thinking of joining the service. I just never thought I was suited for the military.

The next 8 months became a struggle just to attend school. There were only two things I remember. The school nurse giving me a hard time about the length of my hair and the principal telling me I would be suspended if I didn't cut it. I assured the principal he would be doing me a favor by suspending me. How fitting our graduation song was "The Impossible Dream".

And of course there was the music. I can't remember when the music began. I know I listened to music most of my life. I suppose I was in my mid-teens when I began playing. I had purchased a snare drum and cymbal. I must have driven the family crazy with the constant banging. Glued to the radio and attempting to mimic the drums in every tune; not sure how long before I purchased my first complete set; then finally becoming a member of a group. I showed up for practice one day to find "Mike Pounds and the Fabulous Ounces" displayed on the bass drum. I don't recall agreeing to the name although it did have a nice ring to it. We played mostly at high schools on the weekends. During the summers we branched out to places with bigger crowds. I think the last time I played before a crowd of people was at the Tri-City Roller Rink. I had left the group shortly after the audition but the drummer who took my place had a hard time with "Wipeout" so they asked me to sit in on the one tune. I wouldn't play again until Infantry School in the summer of 70'.

After I graduated from high school a few friends and I hitchhiked down to Panama City, Florida. I spent about a week hanging out before I traveled further south to live and work. I was there about a month before I got notice I was accepted to Atlanta Area Technical School. I returned to Atlanta found a job and attended school for the next two and a half years. I re-

ceived two school deferments one in 67' the other in 68'. In August of 69' I received my draft notice and was given a 3 month delay before I entered the Army in November. This delayed entry was for me to train someone for my job. I was a take-off draftsman for a hollow metal company. I spent 10 weeks training a National Guard member from Fort Smith, Arkansas. Unfortunately he wasn't allowed to transfer to Atlanta. With two weeks left before I entered the Army I made one of many mistakes and chose to just leave. I spent the two weeks saying goodbye to the family and some friends.

So now I'm headed off to become a soldier in the United States Army. I had gained about 40lbs. between high school and Basic Training. I still didn't feel I was suited for the military but I managed to get an accelerated promotion to E-2 and gained an additional lb. by graduation. Another mistake I made was agreeing to another year and going to Aircraft Maint. School. For the first two weeks we were tested and pulled KP for the soldiers training to fly helicopters. The first week of school seemed like a joke. Most of the class failed the test so we repeated the test and were allowed to have the book to help with the answers. To make a long story short; my car was repossessed and I went AWOL with a friend from basic training. We hitchhiked to Texas and then back to Atlanta. I was arrested by CID and was placed in SPD at Ft. Mac. From there I was sent to Ft. Jackson for Infantry School. After nine weeks of training I graduated in the top five percent of a class of 300. I had won a three day pass but I was told I'd have to get a hair cut before I could use it. Of course I took the three days anyway and returned to be placed on KP while awaiting orders for my next duty station. I thought for sure it was Vietnam but it turned out to be Central America. Panama to be exact. Jungle School for two weeks, back to the States for a brief time then, sometime in August I landed in Vietnam. The first thing that caught my eye was coffins being loaded to be sent back home. Then on to the 18<sup>th</sup> Replacement Center. Not sure how long it took but I did finally reach Cu Chi and my home for the next 3 months; B Company 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mech.) Infantry Regiment.

I suppose I should back up just a bit. I did experience one more slight delay. When I returned from Panama, Customs took two of the three bottles of rum I had packed. The last bottle was consumed somewhere between Atlanta and Ft. Lewis, Washington. By the time we landed all I needed was a place to lay down. I didn't have to report until the next day so I "crashed" in the airport. I don't remember waking up hung over but I did seem a bit out of focus. Some how I made it to Ft. Lewis and while waiting to find out when the flight left for Vietnam a few friends from back home found me. Once I received the information about the flight the three of us spent the entire time together. When I arrived back to catch my flight I was told it had left the day before. To make a long story even longer I was threatened with being charged as AWOL. Being a draftee I may have said some things that weren't very nice. I showed them the paperwork and technically I showed up on time. I was given another flight time and once again the two friends and I left. We went to the movies that night to see "Alice's Restaurant". I arrived back at the appointed time and did board the flight that would eventually land in Vietnam.

I am not sure exactly where in Vietnam we landed. Like I said before the one thing I do remember are the coffins being loaded for the trip back home. The 18<sup>th</sup> Replacement I believe is where I hung out until being trucked to Cu Chi. I also remember "Alice's Restaurant". As I climbed aboard the truck I noticed one soldier had an M-16 and jokingly asked if it had real bullets in it. I also wondered why only one man had a rifle.

I think I'll stop here. Try and remember I was drafted into something I truly wasn't suited for and I used that as an excuse to do what I felt necessary to survive. To be continued

## Flash Memories – Booms and Bangs I Have Known

We were in one of those small, winding clearings, with heavy jungle bordering it one day, when all of the sudden very loud cracking sounds similar to artillery gun reports started go-

ing off all around us. We all hit the dirt immediately and tried to determine which way the attack was coming from, and what kind of attack this was. The sounds were much louder than one experiences in a mortar attack, and the volume of reports was heavier than anything we had ever experienced before. Ten to twenty or so reports every second it seemed. Like a giant machine gun.

As for myself, I dove under the track (Yet another advantage of being small.) and tried to see the explosions going on all around us--multiple explosions with that very loud cracking sound. Yet, I could see none of the explosions. It didn't make sense. I looked to others and found them looking towards me with the same question on their faces that I had. Where in the hell is this stuff landing if not on top of us as it sounded?

There was no smoke, debris falling down, or anything to indicate that we were under attack except for the loud noises and the earth shaking like a huge earthquake—making it nearly impossible to stand. What in the hell is going on?

Finally, after many minutes of this terror, it stopped. As the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon RTO, I quickly got on the horn to the Company RTO to see what had just happened. He (I think it was **Art Peterson**) didn't know either, but had to cut me off as Capt. **George White**, the old man, was apparently wondering the same thing, and undoubtedly wanted answers ASAP.

Well, as it turned out, we were not given the word that a B52 carpet bombing had been called in just a click or so from our position. Someone, somewhere, had screwed up big time by not informing us of the strike. We were too close. By now, debris was coming down, but it was small pulverized stuff—probably vegetation. I spread the word to the Squad Leaders and witnessed some very foul language from them that matched my own. No one can swear like an upset Infantryman, and we were all exhibiting our repertoires of those words at the same time. We were not happy campers. Was our own Air Force trying to kill us themselves?!

Over the years I have often thought of the terror we felt that day and understand, to some degree, what the enemy must have felt like when they were on the receiving end of a B52 carpet bombing. I also think of the Londoners in WWII, and even the Germans living in those cit-

ies that were flattened by bombing raids. The terror of a bombing raid is something that one will never forget until the end of their days. I sure won't, and the bombs didn't even land on us.

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We were in the area of Fire Support Base Gold which we called "The Clearing". The future site of the Battle of Soui Tre. It was a huge clearing that the entire Triple Deuce had laagered in for some reason.

Early one morning we heard those horrible tube sounds that mortars make when fired. The sounds came from a distance that let us know that it was not our mortars being fired, but the enemy's. This was not our first mortar attack, so we knew exactly what to do. Get in a fox-hole, under a track, or what ever cover one could find and pray like you have never prayed before. I must have made more promises to God than the Pope did during those attacks. Anyway, the rounds started to land.

Fortunately for us, but unfortunately for Alpha Company, as I remember, the rounds were landing closer to them, than to us. Still, there was one funny incident going on during the attack.

I don't recall his name, nor would I print it here anyway, but as I remember, the guy was a replacement NCO. He was running around yelling at the top of his lungs, "Mortar attack! Get down! Mortar attack! Get down!" He was the only one up and so my Platoon Sergeant, **Sammy Kay**, not known for his bedside manner, yells out to him to get his own ass down and shut the you-know-what up!

I still can't believe to this day that I was actually laughing during a mortar attack. Get down? No kidding? We never would have thought of that ourselves! Hahahahaha!

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It was nighttime when a roar in the sky started. It was a roar that sounded like no other that I had as yet heard and it was terrifying. I looked up in the sky and saw a sight that we all, at a later time, loved to see. Streaming out of the sky was streams of bright red tracer rounds so close together that they looked like fire.

Somebody knew what it was and started yelling, "It's Puff! It's Puff!"

Well I didn't know what it was and so I asked what in the hell a "Puff" was. That was the night I first learned about Puff the Magic Dragon Ship, sometimes called "Snoopy" because of their call sign or unit nickname, I don't recall which.

Puff was an AC47 airplane that was the military's version of the old workhorse DC-3. It had a number of 7.62 mm mini-guns mounted inside it. Each gun has six spinning barrels like a Gatling gun that allowed each barrel to cool enough to allow a 6,000 round per minute rate of fire. Most ships had three guns on it. If all three guns could target a football field, they could place one round in every square foot of the field in three seconds. When shooting straight tracers rounds, it did appear to be a fire breathing dragon descending on you.

The nice thing about having Puff around was that we knew the enemy was hunkering down and not thinking about attacking us. The word was that the ships were not all that effective, unless they had visual targets, of course. Then they were pure hell on the enemy. It was the psychological effect of the ships that kept the enemy in his place. After seeing them for myself, I think the enemy was wise to at least wait until the dragon left the area before trying to move around or anything. I sure would have.

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One night, in November of 1966 as I remember, I was on guard sitting on top of our track behind the .50 trying to stay awake while looking into the darkness around us. It was during the tail end of operation Attleboro about a month after we arrived in country when I was startled out of my boots by an explosion so big that I thought Saigon got nuked by the enemy.

Right before my eyes a huge orange translucent bubble appeared from horizon to horizon and extended so high in the air that I could barely see the top of it. As the "boom" arrived, a huge white mushroom cloud grew from the center of it. What else was I supposed to think? We got nuked!

I dropped down inside the track and woke SFC **Sammy Kay**, who was coming awake anyway because of the boom, and told him, "Sarge!

They nuked Saigon!”

Sergeant Kay says, “What?” Then, “Think Dalpez. We’d be dead already if that happened, and you would have been blinded before that.”

Sgt. Kay gets up and takes a look and says, “It does look like a nuke, but I think they got the ammo dump by the hill.”

By now, I am embarrassed and hoping that no one else heard my panic cry of “Nuke!” as everyone else was wide awake and fully alert by now.

As I remember, the enemy had snuck in close to an artillery ammo dump that was full of packing rounds for 175 mm and 8 inch artillery track mounted guns. Apparently the enemy knew exactly where to aim his mortar tube, but it could have been blind luck, I don’t know which. Regardless, they surely put one over on us and left me with a memory that I shall never forget as long as I live. I can still see that bubble with the mushroom cloud coming out of it to this day.

Oh, the hill ceased to exist by the way. Some of it is still falling from the sky I’ll bet.

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There are many other flash memories of explosions, rifle fire, hand grenades, claymore mines, recoilless rifles, rocket launchers, etc. that I can still hear. Most 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations have many sounds that trip my memory about those days across the pond. I can usually be found under my bed with my cat on that holiday. “Bombs bursting in air” is nothing that I want to celebrate at all. Even though I was so very lucky not to have been hit by those bombs bursting, I knew many that had. I think of them all the time, those still living, and those that did not survive. Of those that still live, most tell me that the actual boom sound of the explosion that got them is not in their memory. That’s the way it is with me as well, even though I was not badly wounded, the mine that got our track one day left no memory of the boom itself.

I was nodding off across from **Steve Cowlthorp** in our track (APC# C31), when we were hit with a command detonated mine while retracing a route that we carved out earlier in the day with our tracks. I immediately woke up, of course, but it was the confusion, smoke, yelling, and the awful hissing sound that the dying track was

making that I remember. The boom must have been quite loud as my ears were plugged up pretty bad, but I still remember the yelling, “Get out! Get out!”, and that hissing sound that suggested a fire was about to start...it didn’t, but it sure as heck sounded like the track was going to blow again.

As it turned out, we lost no one to the grim reaper that day, but we all got hurt, some worse than others, of course. After we got everybody out, including Steve who had his back broken, I sat down on the ground. My Squad Leader, Joe Deitz, came over and asked me how I was. I looked up at him and must have jumped a mile. He looked like walking death with his face all bloody and pieces of his glasses sticking out of his face...and he is asking me if I am okay!?!?! Holy cow Joe! How about you?

Anyway, as I was saying, that was one boom that I wish I could remember. Why, I am not sure. Maybe it’s because I want the full memory of the day my Squad was knocked out of action. All I have is the yelling, the hissing, and Joe asking me if I was okay. Now that I think about it, I guess that’s enough.

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The last thing I will speak of here is the sound all Grunts remember. That is the sound of being shot at with a rifle or a machine gun. No movie producer has yet been able to copy that sound for the big screen. I will try to describe it here, but really, no words will do it justice.

The first thing you hear is the projectile breaking the sound barrier as it passes by you. It’s like a loud popcorn popping sound. Then one hears the report of the rifle that shot the round. So, each round has a double sound to it... pop, boom. Automatic fire would sound like, pop-pop-pop, boom, boom, boom. When the Air Force and Navy jets came to our defense firing their 20mm cannon, the sounds were more like a soft roar, followed by a louder roar. ...kind of like, “Grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr, Aaaaaaaah!” “Grrrrrrrrrrr, Ahhhhhhhhhhh!” Again, a double sound.

In all the months of combat that I experienced, never once did I hear the Hollywood sound of, “Bang, ping-wiz.” ...the ricochet

sound of the projectile striking a rock or something. The sounds we heard were much scarier than that. When a bullet, or other projectile passes by your head, it leaves no doubt at all as to what had just happened.

Some sounds I do not remember at all. When we blew the remainder of C31 up with C4, blowing up an 500 lb bomb that did not go off when it was dropped, fun and games with det. cord and C4 in those VC tunnels, clicking the clacker on a claymore, firing the 90mm gun for familiarization...they must have made an impression on me at the time, but I lost the sounds. Other sounds I have spoken of before: The Dreadnaughts firing beehive rounds right next to us at the Battle of Soui Tre. Artillery pieces firing in the middle of the night without anybody waking me up first. The Air Force 500 lb bomb that was dropped right on the 3<sup>rd</sup> C/2/22 by accident. I guess I do remember a lot more booms and bangs than I thought I did. I'll spare the reader any further chit chat on the subject as one boom is pretty much like all the other ones--depending on how close one is to it when it goes off. I know one thing for sure. It is better to read about them, than to experience them. So maybe the Hollywood booms and bangs are just right the way they are. Too much accuracy might not be such a good thing...for me anyway.

**Lynn William Dalpez**  
C/2/22 Original.

## Taps

This is a letter from Randy Bendrick to Skip Fabel.  
Hi Skip,

I've sad news to report, dad (Delbert V. Bendrick) passed away on August 15, 2005. We buried him in his home town of Canton, IL on August 22. He was 88 years young, we thought we would have him for much longer.

We sure had a good time at the reunion with all the guys from the 22nd. I know dad was always pleased to be around his buddies, and he took a special delight in being awarded the "Order of the Red Ant" by the Vietnam vets.

Give me a call when you are coming to KC, we'll play that round of golf.

Randy

Donald Ray Hildebran  
(June 13, 1947 - November 14, 2005)  
2nd Platoon Charlie Co 2/22 from Nov 1967 to 1968

Donald Ray Hildebran, age 58, of Carlie Drive, Sherrills Ford, NC passed away Monday, November 14, 2005 at Davis Memorial Hospital in Statesville.

Born June 13, 1947 in Iredell County, he was the son of Carlie Hildebran Sr. and the late Louetta Buff Hildebran. He was a US Army Vietnam Veteran and member of Sherrills Ford Presbyterian Church.

In addition to his mother, he was preceded in death by a brother, Johnny Hildebran.

He is survived by:

Wife of 35 years: Janie Hines Hildebran of the home

Son: Kenneth Ray Hildebran and wife Amy of Claremont

Daughter: Jackie Campbell and husband Wayne of Sherrills Ford

2 Brothers: Jerry Hildebran Sr. of Sherrills Ford, Carlie Hildebran Jr. of Taylorsville

3 Sisters: Helen Walls of Hildebran, Barbara Brittain of Newton, Cathy Taylor of Sherrills Ford

3 Grandsons: Joshua Campbell, Ethan Hildebran, Sam Campbell

Granddaughter: Kimberly Campbell

The Vietnam Triple Deuce  
Website

**[www.vietnamtripledeuce.org](http://www.vietnamtripledeuce.org)**

Please Visit Today!

Mario Salazar

## ***My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys***

In March, 2002 I was in a nostalgic mood and surfing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Site for some of my Alpha 2/22d Infantry fallen brothers. I was headed on a business trip to D.C. the following week and knew I'd get the opportunity to visit THE WALL. The first name I came across was DAVID ROCKWELL CROCKER JR. As those of you with VN222 in 1969 remember we lost Captain Crocker May 17<sup>th</sup>. That day a lot changed for me personally. I decided to stop and write a quick note to the website in Captain Crocker's honor. I entitled the note MY HEROES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN COWBOYS. Here is what I wrote:

***As a young 19 year old squad leader I found myself very much in need of a hero. I remember one day seeing Cpt Crocker standing atop his APC directing the clearing of an LZ for a medivac to come in and take out our wounded. (I also remember later in my tour he did the same to medivac me.) Anyway, that day he stood there "tall in the saddle" like many of my childhood cowboy heroes. He was like JOHN WAYNE...AND BIGGER THAN LIFE to most of us! 30 years later I still remember his leadership and compassion to every man in Alpha Company, 2/22d Infantry. I look at photos of Vietnam and remember a man who helped me learn the lessons to get back home. I will always pay my respects at THE WALL to Cpt Crocker...a true hero! Rest in Peace with Our Lord.***

This past September I retired from USAA Life Company in San Antonio. It was my second retirement ceremony in my work career. (As some of you know I did 23 years active and a military retirement ceremony is normally pretty regimented.) I wanted my USAA retirement to be fun and a laid back event. Retirement can always be an emotional time but I had promised myself I wouldn't let my emotions get out of hand. Little did I know what was about to happen.

At the end of my ceremony Kristi Matus, USAA Life President, had one of my best friends and military brother Bob McDonald read a letter to me from Cpt Crocker's brother LTC **Tom Crocker**. The letter's contents knocked me to my knees mentally and tears filled my eyes and those of everyone in the room. In short, Tom had seen my WALL note and sent the letter a week before I was leaving. He had no idea I was retiring.

In addition to the Crocker letter, I was presented a huge frame containing a West Point cadet photo of Cpt Crocker, an etching from his name on THE WALL, and letters to me from his wife, brother and sister. The frame was a moving tribute to him and all he meant to me, **Dick Nash, Joe Esser** and many others from our time with him. I will never be able to put into words what it meant for me to get that stuff in front of my wife and adult children who honor me daily by "not" asking a lot about Vietnam. I am truly blessed.

Finally, I want to share that frame and the letters with all of you in Omaha and hope to personally meet **Tom Crocker** and others in the family if they can make it. What a "welcome home" treat that will be for me personally!

**Lon Oakley, Jr. (Alpha '69)**



One of Jim Nelson's most recent paintings titled "Pinned Down" was commissioned by an attorney in Florida and will hang in his office. The painting measures 4' by 2 1/2'. The gunships are from the 187<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Assault Co. (The Rat Pack). The soldiers represented pinned down behind the rice paddy are left to right Capt. Ed Smith, his RTO Bill Comeau. 2/12 Inf. CoA. 2/12 was at Dau Tieng.